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the chief must not be used by him to buy a wife. This would pollute the village (*makhuma*). It would cause unfortunate births (*timbeleko*) and ruin the life of the people.

The chameleon procession is performed in the villages of the main headmen of the tribe during the few following days till, at last, the ochre of the initiated is removed and they return home definitely.

SOME REMARKS ON THE CIRCUMCISION SCHOOL

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The square form of the sungi sheds, so different from the circular form adopted by the Bantus for their homes and implements, might be the trace of a Semitic influence. But, on the whole, all these rites are closely connected together and their sequence is quite easy to understand.

The Ngoma is truly a puberty rite, but not a sexual initiation. The suspension of conjugal relations, and the prevalence of licentious language might give the idea that it is in direct relation with the sexual life. But these two phenomena are met with on other occasions, as we shall see, and seem to be characteristic occurrences in most of the marginal periods. Moreover boys of ten and twelve and men of twenty-five or more can occasionally be admitted to the sungi, and this proves that the school has nothing to do with marriage, properly speaking. Neither is the Ngoma a pure act of aggregation to a definite clan. Boys of one clan often go to the sungi of another chief to be initiated: they do not become his subjects by so doing. Even Thongas sometimes enter into Sutho lodges and Ma-Lemba have a special place in them. It is true that the Ngoma is the business of the chief. Only those who are really chiefs have the right to build a lodge. But though the initiated are exhorted to become good subjects of their chief, the intention of the circumcision school is rather to introduce the little boy into manhood, to cleanse him from the *bukhuma* (p. 58) to make him a thoughtful adult member of the community.

(See practical conclusion on Circumcision Rites at the end of Vol. I.)

II. Other Puberty Rites.

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The Ngoma has disappeared in most of the Thonga clans, but there are a few other puberty rites which have been preserved all through the tribe.

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is the old Thonga custom, and has been preserved by the women in its original form, at least amongst the Ba-Ronga ; they frequently pass a ring through the small opening thus produced. The second was practised by the Zulu-Ngoni, and was adopted by the Thonga men in order to resemble their conquerors. The result is an ugly hole. This is not a law imposed by the chief ; it is however universally observed. When a lad does not pierce his ears, his comrades mock him, saying. " U toya ! " " You are a coward ! We shall put a spoonful of porridge in this big ear of yours ! " (Viz. It will hold food because it is not pierced!)

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The operation is performed in the winter by a man who knows how to do it. Before it is begun, the boy bites the *ndjoo*, the root of a kind of juncus which is considered the best means of strengthening the virile force. The doctor introduces into the hole a small piece of reed ; he takes it out every day to wash the wound and puts it in again to keep the hole open. As long as the ear is not healed, the lad must eat his food without salt : he must not go about in the kraals and partake of the porridge of other people, because this food might have been prepared by women having intercourse with their husbands (ba ku khila) and this would make him very ill (1). He must also keep away from girls. When he is healed, he takes away the piece of hard reed and replaces it by a pretty white object.

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Some Thongas tatoo themselves, or used to do so formerly, but this custom is disappearing and is now preserved only by women. We shall describe it in the chapter on the evolution of the woman, as well as the *hlela* custom, the pointing of the teeth.

It is probable that in former times the taboo character of these various ceremonies was more marked than now. At present they are merely a *shihila sha tiko*, a custom of the country.

(1) This alimentary taboo, as well as the interdiction of sexual relations, were of intercourse with married people, clearly shows that the piercing of the ears is a ritual passage. (p. 74).

836 quite free and the married woman is taboo. Amongst the Pedis
837 it is just the reverse : girls are absolutely prohibited from having
any sexual relation before their marriage and, on the contrary,
after marriage a woman who has had children can have inter-
course with other men than her husband. I shall try to
explain this difference when dealing with Pedi customs. (Part II.
Chap. I. G.)

800 In his book on South African Socialism, Dudley Kidd has laid great
stress on the fact that the mental development of the African
Native is arrested at the time of puberty, and has tried to
find remedies for this inferiority. It may be said that the
vivacity of mind, the rapidity of comprehension, which is some-
times wonderful amongst the younger boys, decreases when they
reach the age of fifteen or sixteen. Cases can even be recorded
amongst them of an arrest or slackening in the development of the
psychical faculties at the period of puberty. But this is by no
means the rule. In all our Institutions we have pupils who show
great zeal for study and increased intellectual power between
sixteen and twenty. I may say that Dr Mac Vicar of Lovedale
concluded as I do, that this assertion of D. Kidd is very much
exaggerated.

D. MARRIAGE

582 According to the old Thonga idea it was only when a boy was
178 fully grown that he could think of marriage. In former times
lads used to enjoy their youth in carelessness and pleasure,
going to dance in all the villages, till they were twenty five years old.
Nowadays boys marry very early. Money to lobola is obtained
more readily and "gangisa" is not as easy as it used to be, two
reasons which have advanced the marriage age in the present
generation.

583 old men carry the hoes and show them to the defenders of the kraal saying: "This is our ox!" Or they hide themselves amidst the cattle as claiming their protection, because this is certainly the only condition upon which the bride's clan would consent to receive the invaders. Mr. van Gennep is right, I think, in rejecting the old explanation of the sham fight as being a remnant of the marriage by capture, which would have been the primitive form of marriage amongst these tribes. The Thongas possess the marriage by abduction, but this is quite another thing, as we have seen.

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178 2) But it is probable that some of the rites of the Thonga marriage must be explained by an older form of marriage. The Rev. W. C. Willoughby in this book on *Race Problems in the New Africa* calls the type of marriage which we have described, and which is met with in all the South African tribes, *marriage of dominion*. The system of family life which results from the marriage of dominion is patrilineal:—children will trace their descent through their father and inherit his property,—patrilocal—the mother lives in the village of the father—patripotestal—the father possesses the children and has full power over them. But in other Bantu tribes, especially in Central Africa, the system is different. There we meet with what the same author calls the *matrilineal theory of marriage*. This system is matrilocal—the wife remains in the village of her group; matrilineal—children trace their descent through their female ancestors; avunculipotestal—the mother's brother has power over them, not the father. They belong to the mother's group and inherit its property. Under this system, the *hloma*, viz. the third "moment" of the marriage of dominion, does not take place, and the *lobola*, the bride-price, is not so important. The husband is only a lodger or a frequent visitor in his wife's village; he is a mere begetter of other people's children, and pays for this privilege by working for his wife's group or occasionally presenting it with gifts.

It is probable that this matrilineal theory of marriage is the older and that it has developed, under various influences, into the marriage of dominion. Mr. Willoughby supposes that men having captured women in raids and brought them to their homes found that system more convenient for them, and wished to possess their regular wives in the same manner. Change in the economic conditions must have had the same result. When, owing to a more settled way of living, property increased and cattle became plentiful, it is easy to conceive that the men of the husband's group made a kind of social contract with the men of

583 the wife's group, offering a higher bride-price in order to obtain the
 591 transfer of the bride to her suitor's home.
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Now, if this is the history of the evolution of the Bantu marriage (and we shall see later on, in studying the relation of the uterine nephew with his mother's brother, that it is quite probable that it is), we may find, in comparing these two forms of marriage, the explanation of some of the Thonga rites. The position of the wife was certainly much more satisfactory, from her point of view, under the old system. She could remain with her people and her husband had but little power over her, whilst, in the marriage of dominion, she must stay in the village of another group, work for it, and perhaps be ill-treated. Does this fact not account for her flight to the bush or to another village the day before *hloma*, when the female relatives of the husband go and seize her by force? She tries to hide herself under a veil, as if she wished not to be recognised; but the husband's aunts remorselessly take it from her, and as she goes to the conjugal dwelling, her friends accompany her, singing songs of mourning. These rites are certainly more readily explained if there was, in a remote past, entirely forgotten by individuals, yet still influencing the mind of the community, another state of things, when the married woman was much freer and more happy.

585 3) We find the explanation of some other ceremonies when we apply to them the theory of the *Rites of passage*. For both bridegroom and bride, there is in fact passage to a new condition of life. They pass from the position of single to that of married persons. Hence the part taken by their best friends and by the bridesmaids, from whom they are separated by their marriage. For the bride there is passage from one family to another, from one village to another.

I cannot say that I have found distinct *separation* and *marginal* rites, but *aggregation* rites are numerous. The *aggregation* rites are first of all the common participation in the flesh of the oxen during the feasts. Nothing makes Natives more friendly towards each other than to eat meat together. Then come the building of the wood pile, the girl's acts of civility to the husband's friends during the *tjekela* and the day after the *hloma*. These rites being collective seem to represent the union of the two families. The new wife performs them herself individually during the first week of her marriage.

584 How is it possible to explain the calculated resistance to acts of politeness on the part of both male and female visitors during the betrothal ceremonies, and even later on? If the girls alone made a difficulty about entering the village, the hut, and sitting down on the

301 and knocked out of shape by a blow or if its owner goes through
 885 thorny bushes. A *khehla* who has some self-respect will frequently
 554 polish and repair this valuable ornament, for it is a sign of mature
 482 age. He who has been ordered by the chief to wear it no longer
 643 carries burdens on his head; his crown would be spoilt! He will
 461 be accompanied by a boy who carries his parcels; he himself will
 only carry his stick or his *assagai*. He will at once be known
 as one of the mature men of the tribe. This is not to say that the
 mere fact of wearing the *ngiyana* gives the right of taking part in
 the important affairs of the country; the counsellors alone possess
 this right; but from amongst the "crowned," will be chosen the
 man who is sent to another chief to treat of political questions, for
 instance.

301 When the hair grows (for, though it is curly, it may become
 long), the crown rises with it and becomes more or less unsteady,
 which must be most uncomfortable! The best thing would be
 to cut the ornament off and then replace it. Mr. Mandjia, one
 of our neighbours at Rikatla, was probably too lazy to undertake
 this job, so he put a small red handkerchief between his skull and
 the crown to prevent it from wobbling.

765 At a certain time all the *ngiyana* disappeared from the land of
 643 Nondwane. The chief Mapunga was dead! The loss, kept
 354 secret for a year, had been made public, and the law requires all the
 885 mature men to take off their crowns when the sovereign of the
 country is dead. They take the wax from the frame, and make
 a ball of it; this they fix on a little stick, and place this stick in
 the roof of their hut above the door. The frame is hung up
 quite close by, and they leave these objects there till the new chief
 orders his subjects to re-make their crowns. This shows clearly
 that the crowning custom is in close relation with the national life
 of the tribe. The "*makhehla*" also form special battalions in
 the army.

178 Nowadays, however, this custom is not observed as religiously
 854 as in bygone times. Life is harder, one must go and earn pounds
 sterling in the port of Lourenço Marques, or in the gold mines,
 and one can no longer indulge in a lazy life! It may therefore
 happen that a poor man will refuse to wear the crown, and say to

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554 his chief: "What shall I eat? Will you feed me? Must I not carry burdens on my head? I do not know what to do with the ngiyana." — "Tiko dji bolile," say the old people shaking their heads, "A ke he na nao," that is to say: "The country is falling into decay, going to the dogs. There is no longer any law..." Oh! the good old times!

F. OLD AGE

888 The man however grows older, older. His hair and his beard turn white, the wrinkles deepen on his face. He stoops. His skin no longer shines with health and corpulence. His wives die and his glory fades. His crown loses the lustre of bygone times. If a branch scratches it, if a knock spoils it, he has not a shilling to pay the repairer! He is forsaken. He is less respected and often only a burden unwillingly supported. The children laugh at him. If the cook sends them to carry to the lonely grandfather his share of food in his leaky old hut, the young rascals are capable of eating it on the way and of depriving the old man of his meal, afterwards pretending that they have done what they were told! And when, between two huts, under shelter of the hedge of reeds, he warms his round-shouldered back in the rays of the setting sun, huddled there, quite weighed down by his years, lost in some senile dream, they point to the decrepit form and say to each other: "He! Shikhunkununu!" — "It is the bogey-man, the ogre!"

People of mature age show scarcely more consideration for old people than do the young ones. Lately in the district of Matjolo, an old man and an old woman, Kobole and Minyokwana, were forsaken by their children, who were moving to another part of the country. They were left in a miserable shed, merely a roof supported by some poles without any reeds to close in the wall. Some compassionate souls took pity on this poor wretched couple, who had fallen into second childhood and did not even know what they were saying.

881 home to her true mother. She also presents her with a pot of beer. A feast takes place on this occasion and the kunga rite is performed, just as for the circumcised boy on the day of his aggregation (page 93). Little presents will be brought by the girl to her adoptive mother who will distribute them to old women. If the initiated girl has been already bought by lobola, the mother goes with her to her future husband and says to him: "She is grown up." He will give her a present of £ 1., and the veil will be taken away. These last rites distinctly mean the aggregation of the girl to adult society, and all this khomba custom is a very good example of a passage rite, the passage being from the asexual to the sexual group.

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178 The Pedi-Sutho clans of the Transvaal also practise this rite, which they call *khoba*. In addition they have the *bale*, the initiation school for girls, corresponding to the circumcision school of the boys. The Nkuna clan of the Thongas is said to have practised it also in former times, but the *bale* has entirely disappeared all through the Thonga tribe.

There are three other customs more or less related to nubility: tattooing, the pointing of the teeth and the milebe custom.

2) TATTOOING (Tlhabela tinhlanga).

304 There have been different methods of tattooing amongst the Thongas. In former times, in the Northern clans, the Ba-Thonga used to disfigure themselves by making very big black pimples on the forehead, the nose, and the cheeks. Hence the name of *Knobneusen* which they received from the Boers in Spelonken. Even the men were tattooed, but they shewed only one line of pimples down the middle of the face, from the forehead to the chin. Women had, in addition, two horizontal lines on the forehead and three on each cheek. It was a custom of the primitive population and is still observed by the Ba-Chopi. The invaders of the XVth or XVIth century adopted it because they were mocked by their subjects, who said: "Flat noses are not

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is dying out; it is practised only by women, undoubtedly in connection with nubility or with marriage. But the tattooing of the face has disappeared almost entirely. What remains is the tattooing of the shoulders and of the epigastric and hypogastric regions.

The operation is painful; girls sometimes cry and must be forced to submit to it. The patterns are triangular. Four triangles are first drawn on the shoulders on both sides; the upper triangles meeting with the lower ones at their apex, so as to leave a square place, not tattooed, in the middle of the back. This drawing is made with ochre; the skin is caught up and lifted with a little iron hook all along the line and slightly cut with a razor. All the incisions must be of the same size. The blood oozes out and is stopped by the ochre, which is profusely spread over the small wounds. Tattooing of the back is not very painful. It is more so on the anterior part of the body. These four triangles are also drawn under the breasts, leaving a square place of which the navel occupies the exact centre. But between the two upper triangles two others are introduced, forming a conical shaped pyramid whose point comes between the breasts.

Such is the ordinary arrangement of the tattoo pimples in Nondwane, but it varies considerably according to the clans, as the two adjoining plates clearly show. The two Nkuna women whom I photographed at Shiluvane in 1900, have only two lines of pimples, forming a right angle under their right breast. The Rev. Alex. Jaques has kindly sent me two other photographs of tattooed Témbe girls taken in August 1926 and Mrs. Jaques has drawn an enlarged figure of the marks which shows plainly the patterns adopted in that part of the country. I reproduce them in a second illustration. Here the four triangles are distinctly seen.

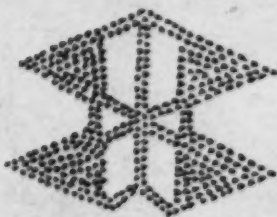
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The freshly tattooed girl hides herself for a week, after which she shows herself to her boy (shigango), who will kill a fowl for her to congratulate her. He says: "It is pretty to tattoo yourself. Otherwise your belly would be like the belly of a fish, or of a white person!" The time of healing is considered as a disease (perhaps as a marginal period). It is taboo to put salt in the food during

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these days, or to go to the village to eat the food of other people (just as it is for boys who pierce their ears). Girls prepare themselves for the operation by eating a special food which softens

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Phot. A. Jaques.

Tattooed women of the Tembe clan.

the skin of the belly (nabyala khuri). All these rules tend to show that, in former times, tattooing had a deep meaning, a ritual value which has more or less disappeared. Mboza told me : "It is not a regular taboo (yila), but only a custom (shihila) of the country."

124 The description I have given of the *lahla khombo*, translating
 128 exactly the narratives of Mbozá, Elias, and an old widower called
 164 Magingi, refers to the rite as it was performed in the normal
 783 fashion some twenty years ago amongst the Ba-Ronga. Now
 765 customs are changing. There is, all around the town of Lourenço
 Marques, an agglomeration of Natives coming from many tribes.
 Immorality there has become terrible owing especially to alcoholic
 excesses, a free and enormous sale of adulterated wine taking place
 in this region. The widows are sure to find there a hundred
 men for each of them, when they wish to cast away their defilement.
 But in this promiscuity the poison of syphilis makes terrible
 ravages. According to our medical missionary, 90 % of the
 783 Natives are contaminated by this disease. When the men up
 765 country saw that their wives came back ritually purified but
 178 physically contaminated, they began themselves to accomplish the
 833 necessary act. This has become the general custom to such an
 extent that, when a widow goes to Majlangalen, (such is the name
 of that hell of drunkenness and immorality), it is now said
 of her: "She will refuse to stay with her legal heirs!" However
 the law of the *lahla khombo nhoben*, to cast away the male-
 diction in the bush, remains inexorable in the three cases where
 [845] the defilement is considered as being of the worst kind: if the
 husband died of phthisis or of leprosy, or if the woman has
 had twins.

Old widows who can find no lovers may be purified by means
 of drugs.

765 e) *The year of widowhood.* Though the widows have found
 587 new husbands, they still remain in the old kraal. They must
 accomplish there "a full hoe," viz. a whole year of ploughing.
 In their new fields they leave the dry sticks of the mealies of the
 year before, in such a way that everybody passing by will know
 at once that this is the field of a widow. But what they harvest
 this year will belong to the new husband. They have now the
 right to *fambelana*, viz. to go to each other. The suitor brings
 clothing to the woman, and the woman pays him visits with jars
 of beer. They belong more or less to each other. But the
 marriage of the inherited woman is not absolutely settled. Her

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581 eventual misunderstanding between them will have its "contre coup" throughout the two groups. The two families regard each other with mistrust, especially the two married couples who depend so closely upon each other, owing to the lobola; but when they have become acquainted, when they are assured that common life is possible and even agreeable, when the first alliance has been strengthened by others amongst the tinamu, then the bukonwana taboos more or less fall off. This is an explanation of these strange relations between relatives-in-law; I do not pretend that it is absolutely adequate. There may also be in this domain some remains of previous customs which have now disappeared, and Comparative Ethnography will probably throw more light on this problem in the course of time.

C. MARRIAGE RULES

582 The study of the terms of relationship has shown us the constitution of the Thonga family. We have seen that they are often dictated by the possibility or non-possibility for a man of marrying certain women. There exist distinct marriage rules, and I propose to recapitulate them here, at the risk of some repetition, in order to throw as much light as possible on this difficult but very important subject.

Generally speaking it may be said that the Thongas are *endogamic* as regards the tribe and the clan, and *exogamic* as regards the family. They are *endogamic* as regards the tribe, that is to say 582
178 they marry within it. Members of clans very remote from each other may find it difficult to contract unions, (see later on), but they do so, especially in Spelonken, where representatives of many different parts of the tribe have met by force of historical circumstances. In the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques you may find Thonga women married to men of other tribes and even to white people. But this is the result of a new state of things, which the old Thongas did not foresee; nor would they have approved of it, I am sure. In Shiluvane, I was in a very favourable

I. *Original promiscuity.*

582 As regards the idea that promiscuity prevailed originally—a supposition which is combated by some scientists (see W. H. R. Rivers, "On the origin of the classificatory system of relationship," Anthropological Essays), I see no trace of it amongst the Thongas. Amongst the Pedis, there is one day when free intercourse is allowed all through the clans; it is the closing day of the second circumcision school. But this custom can be explained on a totally different basis.

II. *Group marriage.*

178, As regards *group marriage*, we may see a remnant of the system 582 in the fact that a man has a special preferential right to certain 595 women of his wife's family, the tinamu. His son will also consider 837 it peculiarly appropriate to take a wife from his mother's clan, the one into which his father married.

The tinamu custom might be explained in that way. There is however a very marked difference between the group-marriage system and the Thonga family law. Amongst Australian aborigines, whilst a man of a group has the right of marrying all the women of the other group, a woman of the other group has the same right to marry all the men of the first. Amongst the Thongas it is absolutely taboo for a married woman to have relations with anybody except her own husband. Polygamy exists and is approved of, but polyandry is strongly censured and considered a disgusting custom. The main reason for this is no doubt the *matulana* superstition, which bears all the character of a very ancient idea in the Thonga system. The story of P. K. which I relate in Appendix IV, will show how deeply the sin of polyandry is felt (1).

(1) It is true that the Ba-Pedi who are neighbours of the Thongas, have a kind of polyandry (See page 99). But this has nothing to do with group marriage, and the wives of a rich man whom he allows to have intercourse with other men, choose their lovers as they like and not according to a law of preferential right binding two groups.

III. *Matriarchy.*

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602 But as regards *mother-right* and the *uterine family*, I must confess that I have altered my views since writing *Les Ba-Ronga*, and would testify my gratitude to Mr. S. Hartland, who encouraged me to study this subject more attentively. I had not then gathered all the facts, and the identity of the *ntukulu* and the *mupsyana* only became clearly apparent to me when studying the Northern clans. Now, having inquired with special care into this most curious feature of the Thonga system, I have come to the conclusion that the most probable explanation is that, in former and very remote times, our tribe passed through the matriarchal stage. Let us carefully consider the relation of a malume with his uterine nephews, recapitulating all the facts.

1) DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF THE MATERNAL UNCLE.

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591 As we have seen, the uterine nephew all through his career is the object of special care on the part of his uncle: if he is a first-born child, the malume prepares his *ntehe*. (See page 46.) When weaned, he goes to stay in the village of his mother's relatives for many years, a girl sometimes till she is grown up.

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583 Later on, when she marries, the maternal uncle claims a right called *tjhumba*, £ 1, on the total amount of the lobolo. It is taboo to refuse it; should a father dare to keep that £ 1, his brothers will say to him: "Do you not fear the gods? The mother's gods will kill you! Your daughter will have no children. Did you alone bring her into the world? Did not these people help you in bringing her forth? And has not your wife grown with the assistance of those gods? Her brother must be allowed to have his *tjhumba*" (Mboza).

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604 On the day of the remittance of the lobolo, the maternal uncle and all the mother's relatives are invited to the feast, and for them a special part of the festal ox is reserved, called *nyimba*, viz. the

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782 assagay. The batukulu dispose of the portion of the limbs offered to the gods. They cut the prayer and, at that moment they steal the meat or the beer of the sacrifice and run away with them. Why is this? "Because a ntukulu does not fear the saliva of his malume" (Mboza). They live in such intimacy with them that they can eat that which was reserved for the gods (1) (See p. 162).

⁶⁰⁴ The ntukulu also takes precedence in some other rites; in the circumcision school the uterine nephew of the chief is at the head of the circumcised. In the *luma milomo* (page 146) he starts the purifying ceremony, and "gives to the others" (*nyiketa*) the use of the food of the deceased.

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178 But it is especially in the question of the inheritance that he shows himself in his characteristic aspect. Father-right has set in and is strongly supported by the lobola custom. Therefore the sons of the deceased have the sole right to the property of their father, wives as well as implements. The batukulu, however, the uterine nephews, refuse to be left out! You will find them everywhere, trying to get something for themselves. They were already planning with the malume's wives to take them as spouses after the death of their husband. Remember how they teased the whole family, on the day of the distribution of the widows (page 208). When the implements were distributed, they came and claimed their *tjhumba* (a technical expression, it would seem, which means precisely this kind of claim lodged by a malume or a ntukulu). They were given the small assagay, the big one remaining for the son. In this way *ba nyiketa pfindla, they give over the inheritance to the legal heirs*. This is a most vivid representation of a right which no longer exists, having in fact become

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⁶⁰² (1) Some ethnographers have supposed that ancestral worship only began when the father took command of the family and consequently did not exist in the period of mother-right. This seems to me absolutely false. The spirits of the mother's family are invoked as well as the father's ancestors, and the special place of the uterine nephews in worship down to this day is best explained in this way: before the gods of the father were known and prayed to, those of the mother were worshipped, and consequently the batukulu held a special position in the ritual. When the ancestors on the father's side made their appearance in the Bantu Pantheon, beside those on the mother's side, or after the institution of father right, the batukulu preserved that special position.

604 obsolete, but which asserts itself in virtue of the survival of an old
 178 custom. I have often been struck by the unconscious way in
 428 which they act on all these occasions! They give the impression
 of people who have been hypnotised and ordered to do something
 next day, when no longer in the mesmeric sleep. You see them
 carrying out the act, constrained by a mysterious necessity and
 without knowing why they do so. The hypnotising factor here
 is the weight of heredity, of all this hoary antiquity, which belongs
 indeed to the past, but still influences the subliminal life of the tribe...

643 As regards the chiefs, I may add that the uterine nephew may
 604 be given the chieftainship over a certain part of the country.
 He is well received at the Court, better than the nephews on the
 brother's side, because, with these, there is always the risk that
 they may become usurpers. This also explains why a chief, when
 in danger, will ask help from his bakokwana rather than from the
 relatives of his own family. The latter may seize the opportunity
 for "bangana buhosi", i. e. to dispute the chieftainship with him.

611 Mother-right most probably existed amongst the ancestors of
 178 the Thongas, whatever may be the country in which they then lived
 602 and the name by which they were called. But everything seems
 to prove that this phase has long ago passed away. No one
 remembers anything of the kind. Genealogies, which are the
 oldest records of the tribe, mention only the ancestors of the
 father. They are recalled much better than those of the mother.
 The lobola custom, which is the strongest support of the paternal
 right at the present time, has been practised since time
 immemorial (1). See also the special names of the great-grand-
 fathers in the paternal line (p. 227).

000 (1) Lobola is however not incompatible with the uterine form of the family. I
 have been informed by the Rev. E. Allégret, working in the French Congo, that the
 Mpongwe and Galos of the Lower Ogowe have still partly preserved the mother-right.
 But lobola exists. The first lobola is paid indifferently to the father or the mother of
 the bride, and the choice is made according to the personal relations existing between
 the husband's family and the families of the bride's parents. When a second daughter
 marries, half the lobola is given to the maternal uncle. The children stay in the father's
 village, but they are under the guidance of the mother and of her family. They belong
 to the mother's clan. This system evidently denotes a less advanced stage of evo-
 lution. However matriarchy is passing into patriarchy, and the lobola custom will
 probably hasten the process.

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611 does not belong to him, and, whatever the child may do in this respect, the ease and indulgence which characterises his relations with his nephew will not be altered. Thus whatever influence the natural feelings of tenderness of the mother towards her children may have had on the special mode of behaviour of the batukulu towards their bakokwana, they are not the only factor, nor perhaps the most important factor to be considered: Property plays a greater part in the determination of that kind of relationship in the present circumstances, and as regards its first origin, the matriarchy hypothesis goes a long way to explain its characteristics.

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178 But let me frankly recognise that the matriarchy theory is but a hypothesis. As Mr. Brown rightly shows, there is not a tribe amongst the Bantus, as far as we know, where that family system exists in its integrity, i. e. matrilineal, matrilocal, matripotestal. Everywhere there seems to prevail a mixture of the two systems. However if there has been an evolution (and an evolution has certainly taken place) and if one system preceded the other, it must certainly have been matriarchy, as its traces, in the present patriarchal system, bear all the character of relics of a former period.

000 I have tried to look far back into the past of the Thonga family system. Now I would ask: What about its future? The question must be asked, because we are not considering the South African tribe only as a subject of scientific study. We are deeply interested in its welfare and in its destiny. New forces have appeared which act in a new way on primitive society.

What will be, what must be the nature of the evolution? How must it be directed by those who have a responsibility for the shaping of the future Bantu society?

We shall answer this question in our Practical Conclusions, at the end of this Volume. For the present we shall be satisfied with a scientific collection of the facts in relation to the two great customs which lie at the base of the whole family system of the Bantus: Lobola and Polygamy.

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177 the same way as Pedi diviners do for their various tribes, representing them by the astragalus of their totems.

As regards these two incidents, they are easily explained by the influence of the Sutho tribes amongst which these Thongas have been living for a long time. Nothing of the kind is met with amongst the Thongas who have remained in their own country, and Maaghe, the Pedi-Khaha chief, assured me that this appellation of the Nkunas, Nyari, buffalo, is modern and borrowed from the Pedis. The Nkunas do not observe any taboo in connexion with the ox, and this shows that their totemic custom is a mere external imitation of that of the Suthos. These two instances might be called cases of *secondary or adopted totemism*.

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178 Considering only the Thongas as compared with the Pedis, we might be tempted to conclude that the Thongas had preserved the old Bantu custom of naming themselves after their ancestor; just as the Thongas used to add to that name other laudatory expressions, we might suppose that the Pedi tribes had adopted names of animals to glorify themselves; in the course of time, the essentially totemic fears and taboos may have been introduced into the customs, owing to the importance given to the shibongo. This would be a rationalistic explanation of totemism. *A priori* it could not be said to be impossible. Though totemism appears to be a very old custom of humanity, it is not necessary, *per se*, that the Bantu tribes should have all passed through that phase of primitive belief.

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178 3) I must, however, mention a third instance which shows that this notion of a community of life between an animal and a human group must have existed also amongst the ancient Thongas. There are, in their folklore, tales which seem to have been inspired by such old ideas now lost, especially the tale of Titishan, which I have published in "Les chants et contes des Ba-Ronga," page 253. A girl named Titishan marries a man. When she goes to her husband's home, she asks her parents to give her their cat. They refuse, saying: "You know that our life is attached to it." She insists, and they at last consent. She shuts the animal up in a place where nobody sees it. Her husband even ignores its existence. One day,

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178 when she goes to the fields, the cat escapes from its kraal, enters the hut, puts on the war ornaments of the husband, dances and sings. Children, attracted by the noise, discover it and inform the master of the village of the strange dancer they have seen... He goes and kills it. At that very moment Titishan falls to the ground, in her garden. She says: "I have been killed at home." She asks her husband to accompany her, with the corpse of the cat wrapped in a mat, to her parents' village. All her relatives attend. They severely reproach their daughter for having insisted on taking the animal. The mat is unrolled and, as soon as they see the dead cat, they all fall lifeless to the ground, one after the other. The Clan-of-the-Cat is destroyed and the husband returns home after having closed the gate of the village with a branch (See Page 323): "Their life was in the cat."

Folk-tales are very ancient, and this one is by no means unique of its kind. (Compare Jacottet's "Treasury of the Ba-Sutho Lore," Morija 1908, Masilo punished for having eaten zebra's meat.) It shows that the totemic idea existed in former times, in those primitive periods of evolution which some Bantu tribes have now outgrown.

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825 4) A fourth fact tends to show that a mystic relation between an animal and a clan existed in former times. There is, in the north of the Transvaal, a kind of antelope called by the Natives *Shidyanaman*. It is taboo to kill it: "If a Nkuna does so, his family will die during the year, his wife, his children, his own head. Should he kill one by mistake, he must cry with a loud voice and shout: — Yoo! Shana n'ta da na mane! Alack! with whom shall I eat it?" Mankhelu says it is taboo to eat its flesh, but the taboo is removed by this formula. The Ba-Nkuna do not know how to explain this custom. It may be a relic of former totemic ideas. However Mankhelu does not call the *shidyanaman* a *ntshupu*, a totem, and these customs may perhaps be connected with the *nuru* superstition (Comp. Ch. IV and Part IV, hunting customs). But even supposing that the Thongas have gone through the totemic phase, the present clans have entirely forgotten these ancient beliefs.

than collecting mafureira or wax, or tapping trees for rubber (1). 167

Moreover the fashion of going to the *Transvaal* mines, to earn money, has become so universal that a Thonga would think he had in some sort failed if he had not made a stay in town (shilungu). There, in Johannesburg, they earn £ 3 in the mines, or £ 4-£ 5 monthly as kitchen boys ; so they despise the old primitive trading expeditions which brought less money and were attended with more danger. 439

These new economic conditions not only discourage Natives from trading on their own account, reducing them more and more to the condition of mere hired labourers, but are rapidly destroying their picturesque and interesting industry. For a few shillings they can buy European utensils. Their attractively carved spoons are replaced by ugly tin ones ; their wooden tumblers by less artistic enamelled ones, their primitive plates by European ware decorated in doubtful taste. Instead of the piece of reed which they wore in their ears as a snuff box, they now buy brass cartridges, and the Thonga beauties, discarding the *tihuhlu* fat, now anoint themselves with a scented oil imported from Europe. There may be certain advantages in these changes, but the picturesqueness of Bantu life promptly disappears, together with the incentive to develop their Native arts and crafts! 177 439

E. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON NATIVE INDUSTRY.

It is a strange destiny, that of these African races amongst whom the civilisation of the XIXth century has appeared, effecting the most radical changes in the minds and manners of people who, for centuries, perhaps for tens of centuries, have remained in the same primitive condition, marking time, so to speak, on the same spot, or, at most, 178 ●

(1) There are at least two species of shrubs whose sap, when hardened, produces excellent rubber. These are fairly wide-spread and M. Dewèvre, a Belgian botanist, who has made a special study of rubber plants, and to whom I sent leaves and fruits of the trees, has classified them amongst the *Landolphia*. One is said to be a *Landolphia Petersiana*, and the other a variety of the *Landolphia Kirki* (Dyer) called by others *Landolphia Monteiroi*. Natives make an incision in the bark of the tree, and a milky sap exudes, which soon thickens and the somewhat sticky filaments are then wound 137 314

178 progressing almost imperceptibly. The transformation would seem to be as rapid as the previous immobility was fixed.

Let us try to discover the causes which may account for this extraordinary stagnation.

176 All are agreed in bearing witness to the fact that the state of civilisation
178 in which Europeans found the Bantu tribes of South Africa is of an extremely ancient date. It is true that we have but little historical data to go upon as regards the development of these people, but, nevertheless, it seems to me highly probable that the shape of their ngula, their hwama, their shirundju, their pillows, the construction of their huts, dates from a very remote antiquity, and has been handed down unchanged from generation to generation. How are we to account for this lack of development, whilst the Indo-European races, starting probably from similar primitive conditions, have advanced to so high a degree of civilisation as that of the Greeks and Romans, and ultimately to that of modern times?

The reply given by many casual observers to this question is that *the Bantu races are incapable of progress*. They are condemned, by reason of their mental and spiritual constitution, to vegetate in perpetual barbarism or to make themselves ridiculous by a servile imitation of the superior races. This view is not justified by the facts of the case. We recognise a relative mental inferiority in the Thongas, as in their congeners the Bantus, but their minds, nevertheless, possess in a more or less rudimentary state, all those faculties of which we are wont to boast. During the several years I have passed in close contact with these intellects, supposedly so limited, I have been more often struck with the points of analogy between the Africans and ourselves than by the differences which separate us. Besides, it is an error to assert that they have not progressed. Their inventive genius is fully proved by the various ways in which the several tribes have taken advantage of the materials with which Nature has supplied them. The Ba-Ronga do not make their baskets in the same way as the Zulus, or the Ba-Sutho. Again, in many separate instances, we can note a distinct forward movement in their industry: the arrival of glass beads,

137 want small sticks. A good yield of rubber could undoubtedly be obtained in this country
314 if the trees were cultivated and tapped in an intelligent manner.

(With regard to the name of the rubber tree, compare *Delagoa Bay, its Nations and Natural History*, London, Philip and Son, 1891, written by Mrs Montagu, an English woman who spent several years in Lourenço Marques and published interesting observations on the country. Without claiming any great scientific accuracy, she relates a few much interesting information.)

one or two hundred years ago, gave birth to an entirely new and original decorative art; during the last century, the contest with a tribe better clothed than themselves led them to adopt a different and more decent costume. (Compare "Introduction à la Grammaire ronga" § XXXI.) When copper and brass wire became procurable, they not only made pretty bracelets, but invented quite a new art, the weaving of belts,

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Phot. Denton.

● Manual work at the Lemana Training School (Northern Transvaal).

(p. 101 No. 1), egg-cups, and cups of various forms very different from those of European make.

The ability of the Native to progress in industry cannot be doubted when one sees the results of the industrial teaching they receive in many Missionary Institutions. The Swiss Romande Missionaries have introduced, in their schools, the manufacture of baskets and mats with the materials found in the country, and the results of the experiment have been altogether in favour of the intelligence of the Natives, as shown in the accompanying illustration. One of the pupils of Shiluvane even invented a new form of basket, made with a single leaf of a big palm tree (*Ingwama*) growing in the Leydsdorp plain. In these institutions

176 where carpentering and waggon building are scientifically taught, the results are very satisfactory, and I myself saw at Lovedale a splendid American desk which had been made entirely by a Native, and was as perfect as if it had been manufactured by a European craftsman. So the industrial stagnation of the South African tribes must not be put down to an innate incapacity for progress. I think we must look elsewhere for its causes, and, without claiming to exhaust the question, I will proceed to enumerate the factors, which, to my mind, explain the exceedingly slow development of these tribes.

176 Their *political system, social and religious*, is one of the chief causes of this state of things. The deceased chiefs are the gods of the nation.
 178 Whatever they did should be done now; their lives are the supreme
 183 examples to be followed; the traditions handed down by their ancestors are the only religious and moral guides which these people possess. Customs which have come down from prehistoric times are law. No one would think of abandoning them. To do otherwise than others do, *psa yila*, is forbidden. It would be a denial of the divine authority of the ancestors, and a danger to the tribe. This principle is most strictly maintained in such tribes as are the freest from foreign admixture and the least exposed to outside influences. In the Khosen country, for example, when an evangelist trained in Spelonken, Yosefa, wanted to build a square house, he was prevented from doing so. It was against the law. How could he expect to live in a hut of a different shape from those his forefathers had inhabited? Had there been no Whites in the country, Yosefa would have found it impossible to build a house to his liking! This is a typical case of the immobility of Native industry (1).

But in advancing as a reason for this immobility the all-powerful sway of *customs, supported and maintained by the national authorities*, we have only pushed the difficulty further back. How has it been possible to maintain such a system of oppression? How is it that no stronger minded individuals have arisen to throw off this yoke and gain liberty of action, stirring up the tribe, in spite of itself, from the lethargy in which it is plunged, like an organism with its blood congealed!

(1) The lack of imagination in these races seems especially noticeable in mechanics, and it has been remarked that South African Natives have not yet invented a single machine. This may be true. However, I heard it attested by a Johannesburg technician that the Thongas have a real aptitude for running engines and a real bent for mechanics. As not one of them has ever studied advanced mathematics, no wonder they have not invented new machines.

Amongst our own races, men of genius, great thinkers, have, from the earliest times, been able to impress their new ideas upon the masses, and lead them eventually, however recalcitrant, upon the march of progress. We shall have to content ourselves with two considerations which may help to solve the problem.

Our civilisation is the result of a combination of millions of minds and hundreds of peoples. The lake-dweller, of the stone-age, was not much more developed than the present-day Black of South Africa: in some respects he was less so. But he inhabited Europe, and, to the South of that Continent, stretches an inland sea, the Mediterranean, which spreads out its many arms in gulfs and bays reaching to the very heart of the countries on its shores, and thus facilitates access between nation and nation. Every new discovery by one soon became the property of its neighbour. Rome inherited from Greece, and Greece from Egypt and Abyssinia, and these international relations, favoured by the geographical conditions of the Old World, explain the development, the *arithmetical progression* shall we call it, of our Indo-European civilisation. In Africa, nothing of the sort exists. Few, if any, gulfs or bays are to be found in this Continent, whose coasts are hopelessly unbroken and inhospitable. Many a long stretch of river, otherwise navigable, is closed to navigation by impassable cataracts. Deserts of burning sand separate the tribes from one another, and sometimes they are isolated by veritable ramparts of lofty mountains. Communication is almost impossible, and the Black tribe, left to its own resources, amidst natural surroundings of an enervating description, remains stationary and content with the elementary industry to which it has attained. *Outside influence is wanting* to stimulate the intellectual energy, the inventive faculty of which they possess the germs.

In addition to all this a second factor is noticeable in the course of human development, and this, while all in favour of the Indo-European races, accentuates still more forcibly the differences between the several branches of the human family. Through the centuries the Egyptian hieroglyphs slowly evolved into ideographic signs, which eventually gave place to the phonetic alphabet of the Phoenicians. This alphabet goes forth to conquer the world, and to give a fresh aspect to things in general. These twenty to thirty letters of which the Blacks had not the slightest notion, these signs, thanks to which stone, wood and paper have been made to speak, will henceforward allow great minds to transmit their thoughts direct to their fellow-men. The knowledge of one epoch will then be passed on intact to following generations,

176 whilst, formerly, ideas were frequently lost or distorted by popular
 178 tradition ; progression will henceforth be not merely *arithmetical* but
geometrical. The book will be the accumulator in which the intellectual
 forces of the race will be stored for future transmission, without
 wastage, prolific of light and stimulus to every sphere of human
 [212] activity. The Blacks of South Africa have never invented any system
 of writing. The idea of representing an object, a number, a thought,
 or a sound by any conventional sign, seems never to have occurred to
 them. Makhani, Muzila's old counsellor, did not know his own age.
 He probably thought, in common with many of his contemporaries,
 that he was at least ten years old. One day I said to him : "Why
 didn't you go each year, when the leaves begin to appear on the trees,
 and make some kind of a mark on the bark of a nkuhlu? Then, to-day,
 you could have counted all the marks and you would know how old you
 are!" He laughed and considered the idea futile, absurd! The
 absence of any system of writing is, doubtless, the proof of a certain
 intellectual inferiority, but environment may easily account for the
 illiterate condition of the Natives. In fact it is environment which
 is the chief cause of their centuries-long stagnation.

It would, however, be doing a wrong to these people, were we to
 judge them solely by the absence of industrial progress. Mental activity
 is not manifested only in the manufacture of machinery or in the
 transactions of high finance. Man is a being endowed with thought
 and speech. Speech and literature, which reflect thought, are phases of
 human activity more essential than industrial undertakings. The
 Thongas, in common with their neighbours the Ba-Sutho and the
 Zulus, do most certainly possess a literature, although they have no
 system of writing and may be classed as illiterates ; of this fact I shall
 furnish abundant proof when treating of their *literary and artistic life*.